

Section 6

Open Space and Recreation

Goal: *To acquire, protect and preserve open space and conservation lands, and recreational facilities and programs, which serve the needs of Hanover's residents.*

Policies: *Plan for the integration of open space uses with developed areas for the benefit of Hanover's residents.*

Link public, private and semi-public open spaces together to form corridors for wetlands, wildlife, and recreational uses.

INTRODUCTION

Concurrent with the preparation of this Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Hanover also prepared an Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). Much of the content of this element has been taken from the OSRP -- readers should refer to it for more specific information.

A random survey conducted by the Open Space Committee in Spring 1995 revealed that 67% of the respondents believe that 15% to 25% of Hanover's total land area should be permanently protected as open space. Presently the Town has approximately 10.4% percent of its land area permanently protected from development. Sixty-five percent of the survey respondents either "strongly agreed"(40%) or "agreed" (25%) that Hanover should set aside funds to preserve open space and conservation lands. Further, a survey distributed in late 1995 as part of the Comprehensive Plan process showed that 83% of the respondents felt that Hanover should have additional open space and recreational facilities. Of the respondents wanting more open space and recreational facilities, 74% would be willing to have the Town use tax dollars to acquire these additional facilities.

The Open Space Survey focused considerably on attitudes toward recreational facilities in Town. The activities most frequently enjoyed by survey respondents, as well as the facilities/activities in need of improvement are listed below:

Table 6-1: Summary of Recreational Activities and Needs

Activities Most Frequently Enjoyed Hanover Residents	Types of Facilities in Greatest Need of Addition, Improvement or Expansion
1. Walking	1. Sidewalks
2. Biking	2. Bike paths
3. Fishing	3. Protected open space
4. Swimming	4. Swimming pools/instruction
5. Golf	5. Golf courses

Source: 1995 Open Space Survey

Note the direct correlation between frequent activities and need for improvement. Another issue raised during the Open Space public forum was the need for a teen/community center. Many residents are concerned that teenagers do not have a place to “hang out”. Rather, the youths tend to congregate in the woods or other non-supervised areas.

With regard to specific Town-owned recreational facilities, the following facilities were identified as those most in need of expansion or repair:

Table 6-2: Specific Facilities In Greatest Need For Expansion Or Repair

1. HHS Track
2. HMS Soccer
3. Sylvester Tennis (tie) HMS Baseball
4. Myrtle Field Tennis
5. Indian Head Drive Canoe Launch

Source: 1995 Open Space Survey

A majority of the respondents did not support the use of new taxes to provide or upgrade recreational facilities. However, 68% did indicate a willingness to pay a user fee; 77% would be willing to raise money to fund upgrades; and 100% supported the use of other sources, such as gifts, tax deductions or government funding for upgrades.

Luddam’s Ford, Tindale Bog, Indian Head Drive canoe launch and Phillips Bird Sanctuary are four of the more well-known Town-owned open space areas. However, only 28% of the respondents indicated that they currently utilize Luddam’s Ford; 15% Tindale Bog; 19% Indian Head Drive canoe launch; and 15% Phillips Bird Sanctuary. The Town should determine why these usage numbers are so low to ensure that residents are aware of the recreational opportunities available in Town. Additionally, the Town should ensure that all residents, regardless of physical disabilities are able to utilize some of these resources. A majority of the participants in the Open Space public forum indicated that the North and Indian Head Rivers are fairly accessible, while the Drinkwater River, Third Herring Brook and Indian Head canoe launch are not accessible enough.

Based on the 1995 Open Space Survey, the following needs were identified. The percentages indicated represent respondents who checked either “strongly agree” or “agree”.

- Conservation lands should more accessible to its residents for passive recreation. 66%
- A “greenway” plan should be formulated and implemented to link open space areas 68%
- Town money should be used to purchase parcels formerly under Chapter 61 of the Forest Protection Act 72%
- The Town should explore options for keeping private non-developed lands in their natural state 68%
- The Town should set aside funds to preserve open space and conservation land 65%
- Hanover should establish a land trust to facilitate the acquisition and holding of undeveloped properties 54%

Additionally, although the Town has a significant amount of protected open space, many Town residents are not aware of where this open space is located, how to gain access or what type of amenities (i.e., trails, playing fields, etc.) these areas have to offer. In 1989, the Conservation Commission published a Conservation Map showing all conservation land in Town, with written descriptions of each. The Town should consider updating this map, and providing additional information handicap accessibility. Further, efforts should be made by the Town to ensure there is adequate access to recreation and conservation facilities for the handicapped and elderly population.

INVENTORY

Land Protected From Development. Protected parcels comprise approximately 1,700 acres and include land owned by the Town, Plymouth County, Massachusetts and several private conservation organizations. Town lands include Conservation Commission land holdings (900± acres), Water Department lands for wellhead protection, schools and other lands under the town’s ownership (640± acres). Plymouth County has control of approximately 4.5 acres of land, and the State of Massachusetts also owns approximately eight acres in Hanover. Although it is entirely possible for governmental agencies to remove land from public ownership, this scenario is unlikely and would require considerable public scrutiny if proposed. Public land is identified by State land use code to differentiate between the level of government that owns the property: Commonwealth of Massachusetts (901), Counties (902) and Municipalities (903).

In addition to publicly held parcels, privately owned land may also be permanently protected from development. Private conservation entities include the South Shore Natural Science Center and the Plymouth County Wildlife Trust (140± acres).

Town Owned Land

Conservation Land - managed by the Conservation Commission. Hanover's Conservation Commission presently manages approximately 900 acres of Town land, including Tindale Bog, Luddam's Ford, Phillips Bird Sanctuary, Indian Head Drive canoe launch and the Mann Brook lots. In addition to its wetland protection permitting responsibilities, the Conservation Commission also seeks to protect natural resources and preserve open space, increase environmental awareness, and promote linkages of open space corridors.

Recreation Land - managed by the Recreation Commission and School Department. Recreation land has been considered "Town Owned Non-Conservation" because it is not under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission. This land is considered, however, as protected from development.

Hanover presently has eleven facilities for active recreation which are listed in Table 6-3. Figure 6-1 also shows the location of each of these eleven facilities.

Table 6-3: Recreational Facilities in Hanover		
Name	Location	Ownership/Responsible Party
1. Briggs Field	Hanover Street	Parks and Recreation Commission
2. Sylvester School	Hanover Street	School Department
3. Everett Hall Field	Hanover Street	Parks and Recreation Commission
4. Center School	Silver Street	School Department
5. Salmond School	Broadway Street	School Department
6. Calvin J. Ellis Field	Circuit Street	Parks and Recreation Commission
7. Myrtle/Center Playground	Myrtle Street	Parks and Recreation Commission
8. Hanover High School	Cedar Street	School Department
9. Hanover Jr. High School	Cedar/Whiting Streets	School Department
10. Cedar School	Cedar Street	School Department
11. Amos Gallant Field	Main Street	School Department

Source: Hanover Parks and Recreation Commission (1996).

Figure 6-1: Active Recreation Areas

Table 6-4 indicates the amenities available at the recreational facilities Town.

Table 6-4: Amenities Available at Recreation Facilities	
Amenity	Facility Name
Playgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B. Everett Hall Field (by Sylvester School) • Center School • Cedar School
Basketball Courts (outdoor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B. Everett Hall Field (2) • Myrtle/Center Field (1)
Basketball Courts (indoor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hanover High School • Hanover Junior High School
Football/Soccer Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B. Everett Hall Field • Harry Gerrish Field (at Hanover High School) • Hanover Junior High School
Baseball/Softball Diamonds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ellis Field (4) • B. Everett Hall Field (2) • Briggs Field (1) • Myrtle/Center Field (1) • Amos Gallant Field (by Curtis School) • Hanover High School • Hanover Junior High School • Center School • Sylvester School • Salmond School
Tennis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B. Everett Hall Field • New Myrtle Fields • Hanover High School
Track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hanover High School

Source: Hanover Parks and Recreation Commission (1996).

Table 6-5 details the Parks and Recreation Commission's planned capital expenditures for the next five years. This table shows that considerable improvement is planned for the development of the Myrtle St. Recreation Facility, with projected expenditures totaling \$190,000.

**Table 6-5: Parks & Recreation Commission
Five Year Capital Program**

	FY98	FY99	FY00	FY01	FY02
Ellis Field Parking Area	\$35,000				
Myrtle St. Recreation Facility Development		\$40,000			
Myrtle St. Recreation Facility Development			\$45,000		
Myrtle St. Recreation Facility Development				\$50,000	
Myrtle St. Recreation Facility Development					\$55,000
Totals	\$35,000	\$40,000	\$45,000	\$50,000	\$55,000

Source: Parks & Recreation Commission (10/18/95)

Water Department Lands. Hanover has four existing water supply areas, with nine wells. The Department of Public Works presently maintains approximately 183 acres of land for the purpose of current and future water supply protection. These lands are also considered protected from development.

County/State Owned Lands

County Lands. Plymouth County presently owns one 4.57 acre parcel on Indian Head Drive. This parcel is adjacent to land owned by the Town of Hanover. It is unlikely the County would utilize or sell this land for development.

State Lands. The State of Massachusetts presently owns 7.94 acres of land in Hanover, one parcel of which is owned by the Department of Public Works. Only one parcel (2.71 acres) is owned by the Department of Natural Resources. However, all State owned land has been considered as protected from development.

Private Land Restricted from Development

Lands in this category are those owned by private conservation organizations, such as the South Shore Natural Science Center and Plymouth County Wildlife Trust. In Hanover, there are approximately 140 acres in this category, and are considered protected from development.

Lands Unprotected from Development. Private open lands can be offered various levels of protection. The designation of private parcels as Forest lands (Chapter 61), Farm lands (Chapter 61A), or Private Recreation lands (Chapter 61B) restricts the use of land in exchange for significant reduction in taxes. Land that is currently taxed under the exemptions allowed by M.G.L. Chapters 61, 61A, or 61B have very little protection. Currently, there are slightly less than 150 acres so designated.

Property under these designations allow the Town a right of first refusal to purchase the land should the property owner intend to take the land out of the restricted status. Land may be taken out of Chapter 61, 61A or 61B classification by notifying the Town and paying a withdrawal penalty tax. However, such land may not be sold for, or converted to, residential, commercial or industrial use while taxed under the classification without written notification of the municipality in which it is located. The Town has 120 days to exercise its right of first refusal option to purchase the land. Should this time period pass and/or the Town state in writing that it will not act on its option, the land may developed for alternative use(s), removing it from its "open" status as forest, farm or recreation land.

Chapter 61 Forest Lands. Forest Lands require a minimum of ten contiguous acres under a minimum 10-year management plan certified by the State Forester. Once the application has been received and approved, the classification statement functions as a lien upon the land for taxes levied under the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 61. The landowner must refile every ten years or the land shall be removed from classification by the Town Assessor. A tax is payable on stumpage income for the two years prior to management and much reduced property tax is payable once per year of management. Hanover has approximately 88 acres classified as Forest Lands

Chapter 61A Farm Lands. Farm land requires a minimum of five contiguous acres "actively devoted" to agricultural or horticultural use. These classifications include animals, fruits, vegetables, and forest products. To qualify as "actively devoted" a minimum of 500 dollars in gross sales income during the prior two years is required. One must apply to the Town Board of Assessors for consideration, and the status must be renewed every year. A reduced property tax is applied if approved. There is only one 66 acre parcel classified under Chapter 61A Farm Lands.

Private Recreation - Chapter 61B. Private Recreation land must have a minimum of five acres that is left wild and/or maintained for wildlife habitat or used for recreational purposes by the public or non-profit private group. One must apply to the Town Board of Assessors for consideration and the status must be renewed every year. A reduced property tax results if approved. There are no properties in Hanover designed as Private Recreation - Chapter 61B.

Private Tax Exempt Land. While publicly owned property is the most highly protected from future development, private tax-exempt land does offer some protection. Types of private tax exempt lands include those lands owned by the Salvation Army, American Legion, etc. Although these uses are tax exempt, the land is privately owned, and the owners have the right to sell or develop this property for other uses.

Table 6-6 summarizes the acreage by owner and/or protection type all of the parcels identified in the Open Space Inventory contained in the 1996 Open Space and Recreation Plan.

1. Figure 6-2: Open Space Areas

Table 6-6: Summary of Protected Land in Municipal, State, and Private Ownership			
Code	Category	Acreage	Percent
A	Town Owned Conservation	902.23	40.55
B	Town Water Department	183.65	8.26
C	Town Owned Non-Conservation	520.66	23.40
D	County/State Owned	12.51	0.56
E	Private, Unrestricted	465.98	20.94
F	Private, Restricted	139.82	6.29
	TOTAL:	2,224.85	100.00

Opportunity Areas. Opportunities certainly exist in Hanover to expand its inventory of publicly available open space and recreation land. Large tracts of land or lands adjacent or near to current protected parcels are being inventoried and ranked by the Town. As highly ranked parcels become available, the Town could then attempt to obtain ownership or development restrictions on them. See Figure 6-3 for locations of the following parcels.

Table 6-7: Parcels Targeted for Future Protection, Access and/or Acquisition					
<i>Key</i>	<i>Map/Lot</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1.	31/9	Third Herring Brook access	A.J. Rawson	18.35	Provides access to the River and would links Town properties
2.	44/59 44/12 44/133 44/11	Link between Pine Island Swamp properties:	McDonough & Cooper Richards Foley Meade	1.0 5.0 2.7 2.0	Possible easement to conservation lands Access to Longwater only Access to Longwater only Connect conservation land and Foley and Richard's land
3. 4.	67/2 67/27	Clark Land	Conservation Commission	38.42 18.0	Includes working Cranberry Bog – consider using for educational purposes
5.	59/19 59/21 59/22	Access to Forge Pond, Drinkwater River and Longwater Brook	Lemey	6.5 1.9 2.75	Access from Russell Road. Potential for trails
6.	68/76-81 68/54-55, 68, 45	Forge Pond Area	-- --	119.1 13.7	Lot 68 has access to King Street and joins 45 which also has access to King Street and is on the River. Could improve access. Consider trails and other uses
7.	72/30, 22	Indian Head River	Conservation Commission		Unsure as to ownership of 72/19, 21, 32. Town may want to acquire these properties if not currently owned. See NSRWA title search.

8.	78/7	“Connecting” Tindale Bog and Indian Head Canoe Launch/ Luddams Ford via trails	--	--	On Broadway (Tinsdale). Access and connection to conservation land On Cross Street. Obtain easement from Cross Street to conservation land Railroad bed On River and Railroad bed On River and Railroad bed Along Railroad
	78/46		Smith	--	
	78/33		--	--	
9.	79/10		Lewald	18.0	
	79/5		Holsinger	--	
	79/25		--	--	
10.	39/20	Other areas of interest:	GJ Kelleher	93.6	Tinsdale Abuts other Town land (well district 2 Shown as open space, however not protected in perpetuity.
11.	38/6		GJ Kelleher	11.34	
12.	47/17		--	7.9	
13.	47/50		SSNSC	14.09	
14.	40/6&7, 41/1, 49/1,7 & 10, 56/37, 57/37-39, 58/27		Cardinal Cushing	253± total	
		Drinkwater River	Conservation Commission		Improve access. Consider trails and other uses.

Additionally, the following existing open space lands have been identified as requiring trail markers, maps, and promotion/education materials:

1. Colby/Phillips property - Melody Woods
2. Plain Street site
3. Summer Street site
4. Willow Road
5. Morrill Allen Phillips Wildlife Sanctuary
6. Hell Swamp.
7. Luddams Ford/Indian Head area.

Figure 6-3: Action Plan

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following open space and recreation related recommendations have been excerpted from Section 8 of the 1997 Hanover Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). They are identified here, followed by objectives and specific action items. The following format is used in this section to outline the goals, objectives and actions; in Section 9 of the OSRP, these tasks are organized by responsible party and date for completion.

GOAL identified by roman numeral

OBJECTIVE identified by capital letter

ACTION identified by number and small letters

GOAL IV: ENHANCE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC ACCESS TO AND USE OF EXISTING CONSERVATION LANDS AND ESTABLISH CONTINUOUS GREENWAYS

- A. *Inventory natural resources present and identify the appropriate level and type of public use for each conservation land.*
 - 1. develop and maintain a data base of conservation lands and degree of public access.
 - 2. develop management plans for all conservation parcels capable of allowing public access without harming environmentally sensitive areas.
 - 3. develop rules and regulations pertaining to usage of public lands.
- B. *Make public aware of location, accessibility, passive recreational opportunities provided, and natural resources present at conservation parcels.*
 - 1. update the Conservation Commission's Map of Conservation Lands. Add information regarding handicap accessibility, parking and amenities available.
 - 2. place signs visible on well traveled ways to identify locations of publicly accessible conservation lands.
- C. *Develop and regularly maintain public access on appropriate conservation parcels.*
 - 1. establish a group of volunteers (such as Friends of Conservation, Scout Troops or community service groups) responsible for creating trails and maintaining them, especially in the Luddam's Ford, Colby property, Factory Pond and Forge Pond vicinity.

2. clear, mark and maintain trails and off-site parking on appropriate conservation parcels at a rate of one parcel a year, especially in the Luddam's Ford, Colby property, Factory Pond and Forge Pond vicinity.
3. establish public access easements to existing landlocked conservation lands through Planning Board review of adjacent land development or other means.
4. encourage donations of conservation easements.

D. Identify potential greenbelts, e.g., along the Indian Head or Drinkwater Rivers, connecting existing private/undeveloped and conservation parcels to create continuous walking/biking trails network. Work towards linking Hanover's trail and open space system to adjoining town's trail networks, such as the Bay Circuit Trail.

1. identify landowners of affected parcels and investigate methods of protection and public access easement, especially during planning board review of land development plans.
2. educate, organize and garner support of town residents and officials for implementation of a greenway program.
3. identify major open space in abutting towns and develop a working relationship with representatives in adjoining towns.
4. contact Edison Electric regarding opportunity to utilize their right-of-way for recreational/trail/corridor purposes.
5. preserve existing walking trails & wildlife migration corridors while protecting the safety of residents and animals.
6. focus/target trails/potential trails for development to present to town

E. Inventory conservation lands for wildlife interests and manage accordingly.

1. Provide public access to ponds, shorelines and forests.

GOAL V: IMPROVE AND INCREASE THE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN
HANOVER

- A. *Investigate further usage of Town held property for passive and/or active recreational purposes.*
1. continue efforts to improve the condition of the current playing fields.
 2. continue efforts to assist in providing for an improved field maintenance arrangement.
 3. continue implementing Parks and Recreation Commission's Capital Improvement Program.
 4. identify Town owned lands that are not suitable for development of any kind (i.e., municipal buildings) due to natural constraints/resources.
 5. improve management of existing recreation and conservation areas.
 6. develop guidelines to prevent conflicting recreational users in resource areas.
- B. *Evaluate existing municipal or government controlled open space areas which are under-utilized for potential use/reuse for passive and/or active recreational purposes.*
- C. *Develop neighborhood parks for non-organized recreational use.*
1. identify small parcels and secure use for informal field games, basketball, tennis, playgrounds, tot lots or walking trails.
 2. encourage open space set-asides for passive and/or active recreational use in new residential developments.
 3. make specific recommendations for securing parcels and site improvements